

FOUR

one of the higher ups
in the office said
he was no good at this
sort of thing when the
secretary calculating
postage asked him if he
thought the bundle closer
to three or five pounds,
and placed it flat
on the palms of his
faintly trembling hands

MAIL

because they get so much
they do it with letter
openers in the office,
the way you'd gut something.
no slow slide of fingers under
the licked flaps, as fishermen
curve second nature into moistly
sounding gills, as doctors probe
measured cuts in sleeping flesh
and beyond the seals of naturally
open parts, as chefs gently work
fillets in order to stuff, then cook
them. with them, because they get
so much of it, with them it's like
undoing a zipper. bright lick of
metal, nothing to it.

WASH AND FOLD

the women in this
laundromat do the
drop-in orders.
they read our stains
like tea leaves,
learn our scents by heart,
rarely wash their hands
as they talk earnestly
in hushed tones about
who'd done what wrong
in some small circle